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July 6, 2017

The Honorable Rick Nolan  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2366 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Via email: Will.Mitchell@mail.house.gov

Dear Congressman Nolan:

The City of Hoyt Lakes, Minnesota writes this letter in support of H.R. 3115, the Superior National Forest Land Exchange Act of 2017. Our City's livelihood is dependent on our rich natural resources economy. Throughout the past 130 years of mining our region has proven that we can utilize the natural resources and preserve our way of life.

For our community to continue to thrive, we encourage swift passage of this action which will allow the U.S. Forest Service and PolyMet Mining to move forward with the NorthMet Land Exchange quickly and efficiently. We understand that enactment of the bill will not authorize any mining to occur, but passage and a timely resolution of the exchange would help create thousands of good-paying mining or mining-related jobs in our region for generations to come.

This has been going on long enough, over ten years of thorough detailed environmental review. More than 18 months ago, the environmental review for the NorthMet Mining Project and Land Exchange under the National Environmental Policy Act and the Minnesota Environmental Policy Act was completed. The Final Environmental Impact Statement was validated by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources in March of 2016 and by the U.S. Forest Service in its January 2017 Final Record of Decision (ROD), yet the land exchange still has not been finalized.

The exchange and the bill itself are in the best interests of Hoyt Lakes and the entirety of northeastern Minnesota. Under H.R.3115 and as outlined in the ROD, PolyMet would acquire the federal surface land where PolyMet already controls the underlying private minerals. The federal land is not easily accessible to the public. It is largely inaccessible by surrounding private lands and lacks road or other public overland access. In return, the United States would get private lands which will be protected and further the goals of the Superior National Forest Plan.

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These lands have more acreage, higher public values than the federal land for wetland and open space conservation, wildlife and is accessible for public recreational use.

The City of Hoyt Lakes appreciates your leadership on this matter, and supports efforts to bring closure to this process through Congressional action. We strongly urge bipartisan support for and rapid passage of the enabling legislation through the U.S. Congress.

Please let me know if we can be of any further assistance in moving this matter forward. I can be reached at (218) 225-2344.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark E. Skelton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mark" being the most prominent.

Mark Skelton  
Mayor  
City of Hoyt Lakes

CC: Senator Amy Klobuchar and Senator Al Franken